



Position: Director of Finance
Department: Senior Leadership Team
Reports to: Head of School
Supervises: Business Office
Status: 12- month exempt contract, renewable annually

The statements in this job description are intended to represent the key duties, essential nature, and level of work being performed. They are not intended to reflect all responsibilities or qualifications of the job.

Position Overview

The Avery Coonley School (ACS), a nationally recognized leader in gifted education serving students in grades PK–8, seeks a strategic, collaborative, and forward-thinking Director of Finance to join its senior leadership team.

Reporting directly to the Head of School, the Director of Finance serves as the school’s chief financial strategist and operational thought partner. This individual will play a central role in stewarding the financial health of the institution while helping to shape its long-term vision, sustainability, and growth.

This is an exceptional opportunity for a finance leader who is eager to:

- Serve as a trusted advisor to the Head of School
- Lead with both technical expertise and strategic insight
- Modernize financial systems and build operational efficiency
- Grow into broader institutional leadership and impact

Key Responsibilities

Strategic Financial Leadership

- Serve as a key advisor to the Head of School on all financial and operational matters
- Work closely with the Head of School and the Finance Committee of the Board to create tuition pricing strategy
- Partner with the Head of School, Director of Enrollment and Financial Aid, and Finance Committee of the Board to enhance and continually review financial aid strategy and execution
- Partner closely with the Board of Trustees and Finance Committee, including regular presentations and strategic guidance in close collaboration with the Head of School
- Lead the development of short- and long-term financial models aligned with the school’s strategic priorities
- Provide clear, actionable financial insights to support institutional decision-making

Financial Management & Operations

- Oversee all aspects of the school's financial operations, including budgeting, forecasting, investments, accounting, cash flow management, and financial reporting
- Manage relationship with key vendors, including auditors, investment advisors, external vendors, and third-party administrators (e.g., First American, Morgan Stanley, Pentegra, etc.)
- Develop and manage the annual operating budget, ensuring alignment with institutional priorities
- Ensure accurate, timely financial reporting in accordance with GAAP and nonprofit accounting standards
- Lead the modernization of financial systems and processes, with a focus on:
 - Leveraging financial tools and platforms to improve efficiency and transparency
 - Reducing manual inputs and minimizing the risk of error
 - Building streamlined, scalable workflows and reporting systems
 - Identifying and implementing best-in-class financial technologies
- Oversee employee compensation and benefits, including budgeting, forecasting, and long-term cost management, while partnering with Human Resources to manage benefits administration and the annual open enrollment process.
- Manage the monthly close process, ensuring timely and accurate financial statements, reconciliation of accounts, and adherence to accounting standards and internal controls
- Serve as the primary liaison for the school's 403(b) retirement plan, overseeing plan administration and regulatory compliance.

Leadership & Team Development

- Lead, mentor, and develop the business office team, fostering a culture of accountability, collaboration, and continuous improvement
- Build internal capacity and systems that support long-term organizational effectiveness
- Partner cross-functionally with academic and administrative leaders to support effective resource allocation

Governance, Compliance & Risk Management

- Ensure compliance with all regulatory, legal, and audit requirements
- Lead the annual audit process and serve as the primary liaison with external auditors
- Oversee internal controls, risk management, and insurance programs
- Oversee payroll governance, maintaining accurate processes, and full compliance with applicable federal, state, and regulatory standards.

Operational & Institutional Leadership

- Serve as a key member of the Senior Leadership Team

- Work closely with the Alumni Relations & Development Team to develop financial models, establish benchmarks, and track performance related to annual giving, major gifts, endowment growth, and other philanthropic initiatives
- Coordinate with the HOS, Finance Committee, and Buildings & Grounds Committee of the Board on capital planning
- Contribute to school-wide strategic initiatives, including campus planning, enrollment strategy, and program innovation
- Partner with the Head of School on initiatives that strengthen operational excellence and institutional sustainability
- Serve as a strategic thought partner in expanding and diversifying revenue streams, such as auxiliary and summer programs, while ensuring alignment with the school's mission, values, and community culture

Qualifications & Experience

- Bachelor's degree in Accounting, Finance, or related field required; MBA or advanced degree preferred
- CPA or equivalent credential strongly preferred
- 7–10+ years of progressive financial leadership experience, ideally in nonprofit, independent school, or mission-driven organizations
- Demonstrated success in financial planning, budgeting, forecasting, and reporting
- Experience working with nonprofit Boards of Trustees and Finance Committees
- High level of proficiency with financial systems, tools, and technologies, including:
 - Financial management and accounting platforms
 - Data analysis and reporting tools
 - Systems implementation and process optimization
 - A track record of improving efficiency through automation and system design

Leadership Profile

The ideal candidate will be:

- A strategic thinker who connects financial stewardship to mission and impact
- A trusted advisor who builds strong relationships with the Head of School, Board, and colleagues
- A systems-oriented leader who prioritizes efficiency, accuracy, and scalability
- A clear communicator who makes complex financial concepts accessible
- A builder and developer of people and systems
- A mission-aligned leader who values education and student-centered work

Why This Role Is Compelling

This role offers a unique opportunity to:

- Work closely with the Head of School as a key strategic thought partner
- Play a key role in advancing a mission-driven institution recognized as a national leader in gifted education
- Engage meaningfully with an active and committed Board of Trustees
- Lead the modernization of financial systems and operations
- Expand beyond traditional finance into broader institutional leadership
- Contribute to a school that values intellectual curiosity, innovation, and human-centered learning

ACS is committed to investing in the professional growth of its leaders, including opportunities for leadership development and national engagement.

About The Avery Coonley School

Located in the western suburbs of Chicago and serving 337 children from 40 communities in grades PreK to 8, The Avery Coonley School (ACS) welcomes highly motivated, high-ability learners who eagerly seek new challenges. Gifted and high-achieving students flourish in a unique and collaborative culture where the drive to learn transcends all other differences. Founded in 1906, ACS enjoys a storied place in the history of gifted and progressive education for younger students in Chicago and across the nation. Learning spaces brim with energy, project-based learning, and individual exploration. On the historic 13-acre campus, which is adjacent to a forest preserve, members of the Avery Coonley community thrive in a learning environment that allows for flexibility, creativity, and innovation.

Why Join Avery Coonley?

ACS offers the opportunity to lead within one of the nation's most respected gifted education environments. The Director of Finance will join a collaborative leadership team and a community deeply committed to intellectual curiosity, creativity, and joyful learning.

Compensation

Competitive salary based on experience and qualifications, \$130K. Benefits offered: Health Insurance, Dental Insurance, Vision Insurance, Retirement match, Short Term/Long Term Disability, Employee sponsored Life Insurance, Employee Assistance Program. Professional development opportunities.